

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7585

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 18199

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DEPARTMENT PASS GENEVA FOR WISNER

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, PEEV, RH, UK

SUBJECT: RHODESIA: MEETING WITH COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY
GENERAL

SUMMARY: THE COMMONWEALTH IS STUDYING VARIOUS ROLES IT MIGHT PLAY IN THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT OF RHODESIA. RAMPHAL BELIEVES HE HAS CANADIAN ENDORSEMENT IN PRINCIPLE AND THE PROMISE OF TRUDEAU'S SUPPORT WITH OTHER COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES. HE RECOGNIZES THAT A COMMONWEALTH ROLE SHOULD BE DISCUSSED DISCREETLY LEST IT LESSEN THE PRESSURE ON THE BRITISH TO PLAY THEIR OWN ROLE. HE BELIEVES, HOWEVER, THAT IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE BRITISH KNOW THEY WOULD NOT BE STRANDED AND ALONE IN A POST-SETTLEMENT RHODESIA. END SUMMARY

1. EMBASSY OFFICER MET WITH SONNY RAMPHAL NOVEMBER 11. RAMPHAL EXPRESSED A CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM ABOUT PROGRESS IN GENEVA AND GAVE HIS OPINION THAT THE ISSUE OF THE INDEPENDENCE DATE WILL NOT CAUSE THE BREAKDOWN OF THE TALKS. HE ALSO MENTIONED HIS VIEW THAT A STRONG STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT-ELECT CARTER ENDORSING THE GENEVA TALKS AND THE RECENT ANGLO/AMERICAN INITIATIVES WOULD HAVE A REASSURING EFFECT ON ALL PARTIES.

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2. RAMPHAL THEN DESCRIBED HIS EFFORTS IN PLANNING FOR A

POSSIBLE COMMONWEALTH ROLE IN A RHODESIA INTERIM GOVERNMENT. HE IS CURRENTLY PUTTING TOGETHER SEVERAL "MODELS" FOR COMMONWEALTH PARTICIPATION DURING THE TRANSITION PERIOD, THE MOST REALISTIC OF WHICH PROPOSE COMMONWEALTH POSITIONS WITHIN THE MILITARY AND POLICE COMMAND STRUCTURES AND/OR A COMMONWEALTH FORCE RESPONSIBLE FOR MILITARY TRAINING (E.G., INTEGRATING SOME UNITS OF THE GUERRILLAS INTO THE RHODESIAN SECURITY APPARATUS).

3. RAMPHAL HAS SO FAR DISCUSSED HIS IDEAS IN DETAIL ONLY WITH PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU, WHOM HE MET LAST WEEK IN OTTAWA. TRUDEAU GAVE RAMPHAL A SYMPATHETIC HEARING, AND RAMPHAL BELIEVES THAT IF THE RESULTS OF THE GENEVA TALKS WIN GENERAL AFRICAN ENDORSEMENT, CANADA WOULD BE PREPARED TO BECOME THE CORE OF A COMMONWEALTH FORCE. TRUDEAU IS SENDING A CANADIAN WITH EXPERIENCE IN INTERNATIONAL PEACEKEEPING TO ASSIST RAMPHAL IN HIS PLANNING. RAMPHAL BELIEVES HE WOULD ALSO RECEIVE SUPPORT FROM INDIA, NIGERIA, AND WITH MORE DIFFICULTY, AUSTRALIA, WHICH WOULD MAKE FOR A BALANCED INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATION REASSURING TO BOTH BLACKS AND WHITES IN RHODESIA.

4. RAMPHAL BELIEVES THAT THE PROSPECT OF SOME BRITISH ROLE IN THE RHODESIAN INTERIM GOVERNMENT IS VITAL TO THE SUCCESS OF THE GENEVA TALKS. THE BRITISH ARE MORE LIKELY TO ACCEPT THAT RESPONSIBILITY IF THEY KNOW THAT THEY WILL NOT BE CARRYING THE BURDEN ALONE. "BRITAIN WILL NEED COMPANY IN RHODESIA," RAMPHAL SAID, "AND

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 LONDON 18199

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TRUDEAU AGREES."

5. EMBASSY OFFICER ASKED IF THE SECRETARY GENERAL HAD DISCUSSED A COMMONWEALTH ROLE WITH ANY OTHER PARTIES. RAMPHAL SAID HE MENTIONED THE IDEA GENERALLY TO JOSHUA NKOMO BEFORE THE GENEVA TALKS OPENED. AND FOUR DAYS AGO ROBERT MUGABE ASKED THE COMMONWEALTH OBSERVER IN GENEVA, EMEKA ANYAOKU, WHAT ROLE THE COMMONWEALTH MIGHT PLAY IN AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT. ANYOKU DESCRIBED THE POSSIBILITIES AND SUBSEQUENTLY REPORTED THAT MUGABE SEEMED PLEASED AND INTERESTED. RAMPHAL HAS NOT DISCUSSED HIS IDEAS WITH THE FOUR FRONT-LINE PRESIDENTS, BECAUSE, HE SAID, THEY FEAR THAT THE SUGGESTION OF A COMMONWEALTH ROLE IN RHODESIA MIGHT SERVE TO GET THE BRITISH OFF THE HOOK OF THEIR OWN RESPONSIBILITIES, A SENTIMENT WITH WHICH RAMPHAL AGREES IN PART.

6. RAMPHAL SAID HE HAS ASKED TO SEE PRIME MINISTER CALLAGHAN BUT LAUGHINGLY COMMENTED THAT HE WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED IF THE MEETING TOOK A WHILE TO ARRANGE. HE DOES NOT PLAN TO PUSH HIS COMMONWEALTH OPTIONS BUT WANTS TO LET IT BE KNOWN IN LONDON THAT THE COMMONWEALTH IS PREPARED TO PARTICIPATE IN A RHODESIAN TRANSITION ALONGSIDE THE BRITISH.

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